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**Palmerton Zinc Site****Palmerton, Pennsylvania****EPA Region III****July 1996****EPA TAKES IMMEDIATE ACTION AT ADDITIONAL AREAS OF HIGH CONTAMINATION**

During recent sampling of residential property, EPA identified an area of highly concentrated contamination. The sampled area is on Little Gap Road, an area characterized by large residential properties along the south slope of Stony Ridge in Lower Towamensing Township.

**Levels of Contamination**

Sampling results indicate high levels of lead, cadmium, and zinc. In the Palmerton area, EPA targets properties for cleanup where lead levels are higher than 1500 mg/kg. Along Little Gap Road, EPA found lead levels as high as 7,130 mg/kg. EPA also targets properties for cleanup where the cadmium levels are higher than 100 mg/kg. Some sampling results along Little Gap Road revealed cadmium levels as high as 1,020 mg/kg. In addition, EPA considers zinc levels of approximately 10,000 parts per million (ppm) to be elevated. EPA detected zinc levels in the Little Gap Road area as high as 32,000 ppm.

**EPA Response and Next Steps**

EPA's primary concern is for the residents located closest to the contaminated area. As an immediate protective measure, EPA currently is installing grass barriers directly around impacted homes where EPA has knowledge that young children reside. These barriers will help limit exposure to the contaminated soil. Additionally, EPA is coordinating sampling and analysis efforts to determine the size of the impacted area and the number of eligible homes which may be located within that area more accurately. EPA expects to have initial results by early August. Other response actions may follow at that time.

**Impact on Other EPA Efforts**

The investigation and response actions in the Stony Ridge area will occur simultaneously with EPA's on-going clean-up efforts throughout Palmerton Borough. For example, EPA's on-going home clean-up program will not be suspended.

**EPA'S HOME CLEAN-UP PROGRAM**

On May 6, EPA resumed its home clean-up program in Palmerton. The purpose of the home cleanups is to remove lead, cadmium, and zinc contamination from inside homes and to reduce the possibility of exposure outside. EPA's clean-up actions are determined by where the contami-

nation is and how much is present. For example, indoor contamination may require carpet replacement or just a thorough cleaning depending on how much contamination is present. Outdoor contamination usually requires some soil treatment and a grass cover to reduce exposure to contaminants in the soil.

**Cleanup Eligibility**

Not all homes are eligible for cleanup; they must meet specific criteria. The first criterion is whether young children (six years old or younger) either live or spend a lot of time at the residence. The main way that people can be exposed to the contaminants is by ingesting or breathing contaminated dust. Young children are more likely to be exposed since they play on the floor or on the ground and then may put their hands in their mouths. In addition, lead, one of the primary contaminants, is more harmful to children than adults.

The second criterion is the level of lead and cadmium found at the residence. Homes with young children and high levels of lead or cadmium are automatically eligible for cleanup. EPA decides whether to clean homes with small children and moderate levels of lead or cadmium on a case-by-case basis.

**How to Reduce Exposure to Contaminants**

There are several steps that residents can take to reduce exposure to contaminants. Since the main exposure route is through dust, clean and vacuum with a fresh bag often. Also, keep outside areas covered with grass or plants so that as little soil as possible is exposed.

**EPA is Scheduling Cleanups Now**

EPA has already cleaned approximately 100 homes. To find out if your home qualifies for cleanup or to request sampling, contact one of the following EPA representatives as soon as possible.

**For Additional Site Information****Contact:****Michael Towle****On-Scene Coordinator****826-5074****OR****Larry Brown****Community Involvement Coordinator****U.S. EPA, Region III (3EA30)****841 Chestnut Street****Philadelphia, PA 19107****(215) 566-5527 or (800) 553-2509**

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## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE INTERIM REMOVAL ACTION (HOME CLEAN-UP) PROCESS



**Step One:** EPA develops a list of locations to be sampled from residents' requests. EPA then samples soil, interior dust, and/or paint at these residences, depending upon the owner's wishes. If you would like EPA to sample your home, please call (610) 826-5074.



**Step Two:** Resident responds to a survey questionnaire indicating ownership of the property, the presence of young children in the household, and interest in the Interim Removal Action.



**Step Three:** EPA evaluates the results of the survey samples and determines if the property is eligible for the clean-up program. Although EPA considers many factors in determining eligibility, the presence of young children and high levels of lead and/or cadmium at the residence are key factors. Cleanups may be limited to address situations of lesser contamination.



**Step Four:** EPA mails the analytical results and analysis of eligibility to the residents. EPA then coordinates with the owners of the eligible properties to perform the cleanup. The property owner must agree to the cleanup before EPA schedules the cleanup.



**Step Five:** EPA schedules the cleanup of interested and eligible properties. EPA reviews the clean-up process with the homeowner and, if necessary, discusses how to accommodate the owner's requests.



**Step Six:** If the property owner wants the interior of the house cleaned, EPA provides the property owner with packing materials and information on how to prepare the home for cleanup. Possessions should be placed in boxes but do not need to be removed from the house.



**Step Seven:** If carpeting will need to be replaced because of contamination, EPA hires an appraiser to prepare an estimate of the replacement cost. EPA and the homeowner sign and notarize a replacement agreement which requires EPA to pay the owner for the replacement. EPA will deal with any property damage which may occur on a case-by-case basis.



**Step Eight:** EPA then conducts a survey of asbestos-containing material to ensure that EPA does not unknowingly disturb this material during the cleanup. However, EPA will not address asbestos-containing material.



**Step Nine:** If interior cleaning is performed, EPA requests that families temporarily relocate from the premises during the interior cleanup (approximately four days) to prevent any unnecessary exposure and to facilitate a prompt cleanup. EPA reimburses families for meals and lodging while out of the house.



**Step Ten:** EPA cleans the interior and/or exterior of eligible properties. The family may return when the interior cleaning is done.

### MAILING LIST ADDITIONS

If you would like to receive more information on the Palmerton Zinc Site, please fill out this form and return it to the following address. If you are already on the mailing list (you have received information in the past), please give this coupon to a friend to send in.

Larry Brown  
U.S. EPA, Region III (3EA30)  
841 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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